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Secretariat

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Administrative instruction*

Performance Appraisal System

The Under-Secretary-General for Management, pursuant to section 4.2 of Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/1997/1 and for the purpose of establishing a Performance Appraisal System pursuant to staff rule 101.3, promulgates the following:

Section 1
Scope of application

The present instruction applies to all staff members who do not report directly to the Secretary-General and who hold appointments of at least one year under the 100 series of the Staff Rules. Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/1997/13 will apply to staff members who report directly to the Secretary-General.

Section 2
Purpose

The Performance Appraisal System (PAS) is designed to improve overall organizational performance by encouraging a higher level of involvement and motivation and increased staff participation in the planning, delivery and evaluation of work. The system establishes a process for achieving responsibility and accountability in the execution of programmes approved by the General Assembly. It is based on linking individual work plans with those of departments and offices and entails setting goals, planning work in advance and providing ongoing feedback. An important function of the PAS is to promote communication between staff members and supervisors on the goals to be achieved and the basis on which individual performance will be assessed, encouraging teamwork in the process.

Section 3
Appraisal period

3.1 Except as provided in sections 3.2 to 3.4, the performance cycle shall be an annual one, beginning on 1 January or 1 April of each year. The head of each department or office shall decide on the commencement date, based on the needs of that department or office, and shall inform the Under-Secretary-General for Management of that decision.

3.2 When a staff member takes up new duties upon recruitment, transfer or assignment in the course of the performance year, an individual work plan shall be established, a mid-point review conducted and an appraisal made for the period between the beginning of the new duties and the end of the performance year if such period is six months or more.

3.3 When a staff member or his or her supervisor is reassigned or transferred from a department or office, or is separated from service, an appraisal shall be made for the period between the beginning of the performance year and the reassignment, transfer or separation, if such period is six months or more.

3.4 A staff member may request a special evaluation report in respect of an assignment of less than six months in another work unit or in a mission. Such a report should be consistent with the principles of the PAS. The report should state what was expected of the staff member and whether this was discussed by the staff member and the supervisor. The supervisor should appraise the performance and give an

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overall performance rating consistent with the rating system set out in section 8. Special evaluation reports shall be included in the official status file of the staff member concerned.

Section 4
Work planning and goal setting

4.1 Prior to the beginning of the performance cycle, heads of departments and offices meet with the senior managers under their direct supervision and develop, as appropriate, a departmental or office work plan that will be the foundation for work unit plans. Departmental and work unit plans may be developed on an annual or biennial basis, depending on the needs of the department or office. In the light of these plans, programme managers meet with the staff under their direct supervision to ensure that the objectives of the work unit are understood, and annual individual work plans are drawn up. Supervisors may meet with the staff in their work unit either as a group or individually.

4.2 Each staff member prepares, in a timely manner, a draft work plan briefly describing the goals and specific actions for which the staff member is responsible during the performance year. Goals may include ongoing responsibilities, special projects or activities to be undertaken during the period. For each goal there should be an indication of how success will be determined. Differences of opinion between a staff member and the first appraising officer relating to an individual work plan should be resolved through discussion. If this is not possible, the first appraising officer should bring the matter to the attention of the second appraising officer. Regular feedback and guidance should be a mandatory requirement of the process.

4.3 Every staff member is expected to indicate at least one professional development goal to be achieved in the reporting period. The action to be taken may include special assignments, continuing education, on-the-job training, seminars, conferences or individual study.

4.4 All staff with managerial or supervisory responsibility for a work unit are also required to indicate managerial and supervisory goals that relate to managing the human and financial resources entrusted to them; leading, motivating and developing staff; and demonstrating gender and cross-cultural responsiveness.

Section 5
Mid-year performance review

5.1 In the middle of each performance year, the first appraising officer reviews with each staff member the manner in which the individual work plan has been carried out and provides performance feedback and guidance for the accomplishment of the goals set out in the work plan. At that time, the work plan may be revised if there have been significant changes in the nature of the functions carried out by the staff member, or if such revision is required to pursue revised goals of the work unit. Comments are required only in cases where there are changes in assignments or priorities, or where remedial action is proposed to close performance gaps.

5.2 Staff members and supervisors are encouraged to take the initiative to discuss work performance whenever needed in the course of the performance year, in addition to the mid-year performance review. As soon as a performance shortcoming is identified, the supervisor should discuss the situation with the staff member and take steps to rectify the situation, such as the development of a performance improvement plan, in consultation with the staff member.

Section 6
Year-end performance appraisal

6.1 The first appraising officer and the staff member meet at the end of the performance year to discuss the overall performance during the reporting period. Prior to the meeting, the staff member should prepare a preliminary assessment of the manner in which he or she has carried out the work plan defined at the beginning of the performance year. The first appraising officer appraises the extent to which the staff member has achieved the goals set and met the success criteria. The first appraising officer is also required to comment on the staff member's efficiency, competence and integrity in the performance of his or her functions, and assign an overall rating.

6.2 The second appraising officer reviews the performance appraisal form and signs it. He or she may also make comments, if desired.

6.3 Subsequently, the staff member receives the form for his or her signature. The staff member may make comments on the appraisal, and on the first appraising officer's role as a supervisor during the appraisal period, if desired. The second appraising officer forwards the completed form to the appropriate executive or personnel office for inclusion in the staff member's official status file.

Section 7
Responsibility for timely execution of the Performance Appraisal System

Primary responsibility for the timely execution of the PAS, including completion of the PAS forms, rests with the supervisor. Each staff member is required to provide in a

timely manner a draft individual work plan and to participate in scheduled discussions with the supervisor at the mid-year review and the year-end appraisal.

Section 8
Rating system

8.1 The PAS offers the following three ratings for staff who have met or exceeded expectations:

- Fully meets performance expectations;
- Frequently exceeds performance expectations;
- Consistently exceeds performance expectations.

These three ratings establish full satisfaction with the work performed and shall be so viewed when staff members having received those ratings are considered for renewal of a fixed-term appointment or selection for a post at the same or a higher level, without prejudice to the principle that such decisions remain within the discretionary authority of the Secretary-General.

8.2 Where staff do not fully meet the performance expectations, one of the following two ratings should be given:

- Partially meets performance expectations;
- Does not meet performance expectations.

These ratings indicate the existence of shortcomings, which may call for a specific remedial plan. A rating of "partially meets performance expectations" may justify the withholding of a within-grade increment, particularly if the same rating is given for a second consecutive year. A rating of "does not meet performance expectations" may lead to a number of administrative actions, such as transfer to a different post or function, the withholding of a within-grade increment, the non-renewal of a fixed-term contract or termination for unsatisfactory service.

Section 9
Management Review Committee

A Management Review Committee shall be constituted in each department or office. The members of the Committee, who shall be appointed by the head of the department or office, will normally be the senior line managers of that department or office. The Committee shall oversee and review the overall process of PAS implementation at the departmental level in order to ensure consistency at all phases of the process.

Section 10
Joint Monitoring Committee

10.1 A Joint Monitoring Committee shall be constituted in each department or office. The members of the Committee shall be appointed by the head of the department or office and shall consist of two members nominated by management, two members nominated by the staff from the department or office in accordance with local practice and a chairperson nominated by the head of the department or office in consultation with the staff. Each member shall serve for a two-year renewable term.

10.2 The Joint Monitoring Committee shall monitor and review the implementation of the PAS by the department or office concerned with respect to timeliness of the process, compliance with its procedures and overall results. It shall work with the department or office to support the institutionalization of the PAS in that department or office for the first three years following full implementation of the PAS, after which the necessity for maintaining Joint Monitoring Committees will be reviewed. The head of the department or office shall provide the Committee with the statistical information necessary to conduct this review. While the mandate of the Committee does not include consideration of individual cases, individual staff members may agree that their cases shall be considered in the context of a discussion of broader issues of general impact. The Joint Monitoring Committee shall draw the attention of the Management Review Committee of the department or office to any problems it perceives in the implementation of the PAS and may propose possible solutions.

10.3 The Joint Monitoring Committee shall meet three times a year, namely, at the performance planning stage, immediately after the mid-year review and at the appraisal stage at the end of the performance year. It shall prepare a compliance report for each of those stages. The reports concerning the performance planning stage and the mid-year review shall be submitted to the Management Review Committee through the head of the department or office. The report concerning the appraisal at the end of the performance year shall be submitted to the Global Joint Monitoring Committee within 45 days of the last working day of the relevant performance year. That report shall include a consolidation of the first two reports, a compliance review of the end-of-year appraisals and an overall summary of the PAS implementation process in the department or office for that year.

Section 11
Global Joint Monitoring Committee

11.1 The Global Joint Monitoring Committee shall be a subsidiary body of the Staff-Management Coordination Committee. The Global Joint Monitoring Committee shall be composed of two members nominated by management, two nominated by the staff and a chairperson appointed after staff consultation by the President of the Staff-Management Coordination Committee. Each member shall serve for a one-year renewable term. The Global Joint Monitoring Committee shall perform its functions for the first three years following full implementation of the PAS.

11.2 The Global Joint Monitoring Committee shall examine policy issues involved in PAS implementation. It shall review the reports submitted by Joint Monitoring Committees and prepare an annual report on the implementation of the PAS in the various departments and offices. That report shall include recommendations on the implementation and overall effectiveness of the PAS and shall be submitted to the Secretary-General through the Staff-Management Coordination Committee.

11.3 The Global Joint Monitoring Committee shall meet once a year, immediately prior to the annual meeting of the Staff-Management Coordination Committee, which will review the report of the Global Joint Monitoring Committee and transmit it to the Secretary-General.

Section 12
Rebuttal panels

12.1 In consultation with the staff representatives of the department or office concerned, the head of the department or office, or his or her representative, shall draw up a list of rebuttal panel members composed of three groups of staff members from the department or office concerned, in equal numbers. The list shall be composed as follows:

(a) Rebuttal panel members designated by the head of the department or office;

(b) Rebuttal panel members nominated by the staff of the department or office through an election that should identify at least twice the number of individuals required for this group;

(c) Rebuttal panel chairpersons, selected by the head of the department or office after consultation with the staff representatives of that department or office.

The approved list, subdivided as indicated above, shall comprise nine individuals in all for large departments or offices, six for smaller departments or offices. Every effort shall be made to obtain an appropriate geographical and gender balance, where possible. The head of department or office shall inform the staff in writing of the composition of the approved list.

12.2 Rebuttal panel members shall serve for a two-year term. In the event that a member of the rebuttal panel is assigned to functions outside the department or office concerned, he or she shall be replaced in accordance with the procedure relevant to the group to which the rebuttal panel member belongs.

12.3 In small offices where it may be difficult to constitute a list from the staff members of that office, the approved list may include staff members from other Secretariat offices at the same duty station, provided those staff members have the knowledge and experience required to review the appraisal and its rating.

Section 13
Rebuttal process

13.1 Staff members who disagree with the performance rating given at the end of the performance year may, within 30 days of signing the completed performance appraisal form, submit to their Executive Office at Headquarters, or to the Chief of Administration elsewhere, a written rebuttal statement setting forth briefly the specific reasons why a higher rating should have been given. Staff members having received the rating of "consistently exceeds performance expectations" may not initiate a rebuttal. The rebuttal statement shall contain the names of the three individuals, one from each of the three groups identified in section 12.1 above, whom the staff member has selected to serve on the rebuttal panel. A copy of the rebuttal statement shall be placed in the staff member's official status file.

13.2 After receiving a copy of the rebuttal statement, the head of department or office, or his or her representative, shall promptly prepare and submit to the rebuttal panel a brief written statement in reply to the rebuttal statement submitted by the staff member. A copy of the reply to the rebuttal statement shall be given to the staff member and placed in his or her official status file. Unless geographical location makes it impractical, the panel shall hear the staff member, the first and second appraising officers and, at the discretion of the panel, other staff members who may have information relevant to the review of the appraisal rating.

13.3 The rebuttal panels shall prepare with maximum dispatch a brief report setting forth the reasons why the original appraisal rating should or should not be maintained. The report of the rebuttal panel shall be placed in the staff member's official status file. The performance rating resulting from the rebuttal process shall be binding on the

head of the department or office and on the staff member concerned, subject to the ultimate authority of the Secretary-General as Chief Administrative Officer of the Organization, who may review the matter as needed on the basis of the record.

13.4 The rating resulting from an appraisal that has not been rebutted, or from the rebuttal process, shall not be subject to further appeal. However, administrative decisions that stem from any final performance appraisal and that affect the conditions of service of a staff member may be appealed.

Section 14
Performance Appraisal System and salary increments

14.1 Under staff rule 103.8 (a), the granting of salary increments is subject to the satisfactory performance and conduct of staff members as evaluated by their supervisors, unless otherwise decided by the Secretary-General in any particular case. The determination that service is "satisfactory" in respect of performance and the procedures for withholding a salary increment when such a determination cannot be made are governed by the provisions of this section.

Basis for the decision

14.2 The basis for the decision to award or withhold a salary increment on the basis of performance shall be the record of performance of the staff member as documented by the PAS.

14.3 The following ratings shall justify a determination that awarding a salary increment is warranted:

- Fully meets performance expectations;
- Frequently exceeds performance expectations;
- Consistently exceeds performance expectations.

14.4 One annual rating of "partially meets performance expectations" may justify the withholding of a salary increment, provided it is documented that, during the corresponding performance year, a performance improvement plan was put into place, in accordance with section 5.2 above, but that the staff member's performance failed to rise to a level that would justify a rating of "fully meets performance expectations".

14.5 Two consecutive annual ratings of "partially meets performance expectations" shall normally lead to the withholding of a salary increment.

14.6 One rating of "does not meet performance expectations" shall normally lead to the withholding of a salary increment.

Procedures

14.7 The decision whether to grant or withhold a salary increment shall be taken by the first appraising officer on the basis of the staff member's most recent PAS. The decision to withhold a salary increment shall be communicated to the staff member in writing, before the decision is implemented, by the Executive Office, with a copy to the Office of Human Resources Management, or by the local personnel office. Should the PAS rating on the basis of which a salary increment has been withheld be upgraded at a later stage as a result of the rebuttal process described under section 13 above, and should the new rating justify the award of the salary increment, that increment shall be awarded and made effective as from the date on which it would have otherwise been paid.

14.8 The decision to withhold an increment on the basis of a PAS rating is not subject to review by a rebuttal panel, which deals only with performance ratings, but may be appealed in accordance with Chapter XI of the Staff Rules.

Section 15
Performance Appraisal System forms and guidelines

15.1 The Office of Human Resources Management shall make available PAS forms and guidelines, which shall be available from the relevant executive or personnel office of the department or office concerned. The forms and guidelines shall also be available electronically.

15.2 The PAS guidelines are intended solely for general guidance and information. Should there be any inconsistency between the guidelines and the text of the present instruction, the provisions of the instruction shall prevail.

Section 16
Entry into force and transitory provisions

16.1 The present instruction shall enter into force on 1 December 1999.

16.2 Administrative instruction ST/AI/1997/8 and personnel directive PD/5/69 are hereby abolished.

(*Signed*) Joseph E. **Connor**
Under-Secretary-General for Management